

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03

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FM AMEMBASSY ANKARA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3410

INFO USINT BAGHDAD

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

USMISSION USUN

AMCONSUL ADANA

AMCONSUL ISTANBUL

AMCONSUL IZMIR

C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 2341

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, IZ, TU

SUBJECT: KURDISH PROBLEM IN IRAQ

REF: ANKARA 1963

SUMMARY: VIEW OF SENIOR FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIAL IS THAT IRAQI GOVERNMENT, NOTWITHSTANDING ITS ULTIMATUM TO THE BARZANI-LED KURDISH FORCES IN IRAQ TO ACCEPT ITS AUTONOMY PROPOSAL BY MARCH 26, MAY CONTINUE TO NEGOTIATE WITH BARZANI RATHER THAN FIGHT. GOT, INTERESTED BOTH IN KURDISH PROBLEM AND IN ITS RELATIONS WITH IRAQ, IS FOLLOWING DEVELOPMENTS CLOSELY AND PREVENTING INVOLVEMENT OF ITS OWN KURDISH ELEMENTS. END SUMMARY.

1. ON MARCH 26, DEADLINE REPORTEDLY SET BY IRAQI GOVERNMENT FOR KURDISH ACCEPTANCE OF GOI AUTONOMY PROPOSAL, WE CALLED
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ON HEAD OF MFA MIDDLE EAST AND AFRICA DEPARTMENT FARUK

CELIOGLU TO ASK GOT'S VIEWS ON DEVELOPMENTS IN IRAQ.

2. IRAQ, CELIOGLU SAID, HAS TOLD THE GOT THAT IT WOULD BE ABLE TO HANDLE THE KURDISH PROBLEM. IF IT CAME TO FIGHTING, CELIOGLU THOUGHT THAT THE IRAQI ARMY, WHICH HAD BEEN SUPPLIED WITH MODERN ANTI-GUERRILLA-TYPE WEAPONS BY THE SOVIETS, WOULD BE IN A GOOD POSITION TO CONDUCT MILITARY OPERATIONS AGAINST BARZANI'S FORCES, ALTHOUGH THE LATTER HAVE RECEIVED A CONSIDERABLE SUPPLY OF ARMS, PRESUMABLY FROM BOTH THE USSR AND IRAN. HE THOUGHT IT QUITE POSSIBLE, HOWEVER, THAT INSTEAD OF FIGHTING IRAQ WOULD TRY TO NEGOTIATE WITH BARZANI, NOTWITHSTANDING THE MARCH 26 DEADLINE.

3. THE TURKISH MILITARY AUTHORITIES, CELIOGLU CONTINUED, HAD ALREADY TAKEN ADEQUATE PRECAUTIONS TO PREVENT ANY INVOLVEMENT BY KURDISH ELEMENTS IN TURKEY. THE GOT, HOWEVER, CONTRARY TO NEWS REPORTS, HAD NOT CLOSED THE TURKISH-IRAQI BORDER. PROFESSING ONLY SKETCHY INFORMATION AS TO WHAT WAS ACTUALLY HAPPENING IN NORTHERN IRAQ, HE JUDGED THAT PRESS REPORTS OF EXTENDED FIGHTING BETWEEN IRAQI AND KURDISH FORCES DURING THE PERIOD SINCE MARCH 11 WERE EXAGGERATED; THE GOT SEEMED WANTING TO AVOID A MILITARY CONFRONTATION.

4. THE GOT, CELIOGLU STATED, WAS OF COURSE CONCERNED OVER THE WELFARE OF THE TURKISH MINORITY IN IRAQ, BUT IN THIS CONNECTION NEWSPAPER ALLEGATIONS OF AN IMMINENT THREAT TO THIS MINORITY WERE, IN HIS OPINION, UNTRUE.

5. CELIOGLU REMARKED WITH A SMILE THAT "AMERICAN PRESS SOURCES" WERE ALLEGING THAT THE US WAS SUPPLYING WEAPONS TO BARZANI. WE RESPONDED THAT WE WERE AWARE OF A MARCH 22 HABER AJANSI (HURRIYET WIRE SERVICE) STORY CITING "REPORTS" THAT THE US HAS GIVEN TEN F-105'S TO BARZANI WHICH WILL PROBABLY BE FLOWN BY US-TRAINED PILOTS, AND THAT AMERICAN ARMS WERE BEING SENT TO THE IRAQI KURDS THROUGH ISRAEL. WE WERE NOT AMUSED BY PATENTLY FALSE AND MISLEADING STORY. CELIOGLU GAVE IT AS HIS PERSONAL OPINION THAT THIS STORY WAS IRAQI-INSPIRED.

6. EXPANDING INTO THE SUBJECT OF US-IRAQI RELATIONS, CELIOGLU
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ASKED RHETORICALLY WHY THE US WAS SUCCESSFUL IN IMPROVING RELATIONS WITH SOME ARAB COUNTRIES, SUCH AS EGYPT AND SYRIA, BUT NOT WITH IRAQ. TURKEY WAS CONCERNED ABOUT SOVIET INFLUENCE IN IRAQ, HE SAID, WOULD WELCOME GREATER WESTERN INFLUENCE IN THAT COUNTRY, AND WAS DOING WHAT IT COULD TO ENCOURAGE IRAQ TO IMPROVE RELATIONS WITH THE US.

7. COMMENT: CELIOGLU IN EFFECT GAVE US A RATHER RELAXED AND

DISPASSIONATE VIEW OF IRAQI DEVELOPMENTS. HOWEVER, CHIEF OF GROUND FORCES AKINCI AND CHIEF OF AIR FORCE ALPKAYA REPORTEDLY VISITED UNITS CLOSE TO IRAQI BORDER SHORTLY AFTER OUTBREAK OF HOSTILITIES. FURTHERMORE, EMBASSY HAS AN UNCONFIRMED REPORT THAT THE TURKISH CABINET ON MARCH 21, IN VIEW OF THE IRAQI SITUATION, CONSIDERED IMPOSING MARTIAL LAW IN SEVERAL EASTERN PROVINCES. HOWEVER, WE THINK THAT, CONSIDERING HIS CRITICISMS OF THE 1971-73 MARTIAL LAW PERIOD, ODDS ARE AGAINST PRIMIN ECEVIT'S REIMPOSING MARTIAL LAW, UNLESS A MAJOR OUTBREAK OF FIGHTING OCCURS.

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